



John Rubenstein . . . stars in Zachariah.

# ZACHARIAH

by PAT diNATALE

*Zachariah* is billed as the "first electric western." With a cast that includes Country Joe and the Fish, the James Gang and the New York Rock Ensemble, it's not *High Noon*. But it's not *Woodstock* either.

*Zachariah* concerns a young westerner, Zachariah (John Rubenstein) who "...learns to draw at home in his spare time" with the aid of a mail-order Colt. Zach and his best friend Matthew (Don Johnson of *The Magic Garden of Stanley Sweetheart*) set out to become gunslingers and find adventure.

It comes in the form of the Crackers (Country Joe and the Fish), the most bumbling, bungling bunch of outlaws west of Mississippi.

**DECIDING THAT THERE'S** more to gunslinging than botched holdups, Zach and Matt set out to hit the big time, meaning Job Cain (Elvin Jones) and his boys (the James Gang). Zach finds the price of success far too high for his liking and leaves Matt to become top gun.

*Zachariah* wanders the prairie and finds truth at the hands of an old man (William Challee) who has a desert, a mountain and a garden full of marijuana.

The friends' paths inevitably cross for a final time as Matt seeks out the now peaceful Zachariah to prove he is the fastest gun. After a tense interval, Matt understands at last the futility of a life of hate, and the two ride into the sunset in true western fashion.

*Zachariah* is a true western, following the time-tested good versus evil premise. But the viewer might wonder if *Zachariah* wasn't an expression of really contemporary values in a western guise. Perhaps the reverse would be closer to the truth.

*Zachariah* is more than Tex Ritter with rock music and grass added.

**IT IS A SIMPLE** statement of unchanging lust for power challenging the eternal love of life. And *Zachariah*, written by the Firesign Theater ("Waiting for the Electrician" or "Someone Like Him") is a simple movie. It lacks the subtitles found in more ambitious productions.

Nevertheless, Rubenstein and Johnson do their jobs adequately. William Challee, who played Jack Nicholson's father in *Five Easy Pieces*, is a high point as the old man. Cajun fiddler, Doug Kershaw, lends an eerie note from his electric violin.

**THE MUSIC OF** *Zachariah* is bland, with the exception of Elvin Jones, whom the New York Times called the world's greatest rhythm drummer. Kershaw and White Lightning, two oldtimers who play real backwoods country.

Camera work and color are passable and many of the sets have a surrealistic touch which adds to the ethereal quality of the show.

*Zachariah* will garner no Oscars, but it is a good, entertaining flick.

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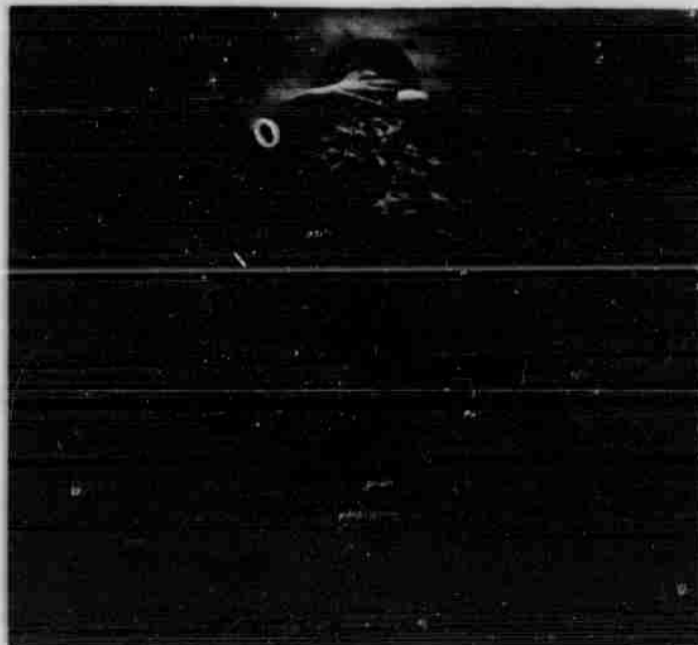
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The Crackers (Country Joe and the Fish) . . . preparing to hold up the bar.

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The body of a victim of the Vietnam war (Jim Brummels) arrives at his parent's house in *Bringing It All Back Home*, one of two laboratory plays which will be presented Sunday, March 14 and Monday, March 15.

The other play *The Happy Journey From Trenton to Camden*, directed by Lon Dornier, portrays the human need for love and acceptance and the fear of death. This show begins at 7:30 p.m. in Room 201 in the Temple Building.

The second show, *Bringing It All Back Home*, directed by Lynn Martindale, in the Arena Theatre, Room 303 of the Temple Building, immediately follows the first show.

Admission is free.